



PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS REPORT February 2003

This report contains an Executive Summary and a detailed summary of interview responses.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

Between January 30 and February 21, 2003, MIG, Inc. conducted telephone interviews with 12 community leaders identified by the City. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain community input on perceptions about park, recreation, and open space in the City of Eugene and about the issues and challenges facing the community. These interviews were one of the first steps in a public outreach process that will support the development of a Comprehensive Plan.

Interviewees were asked a series of questions, and interviews were typically about 30 minutes in length. Responses are summarized in this report.

B. Interviewees

Chuck Bailey, Lane Arts Council
John Crane, Kidsports
Dave Hauser, Chamber of Commerce
Ken Hunsaker, School District #52
Bruce Newhouse, Native Plant Society of Oregon
Jan Oliver, University of Oregon
Jim and Ginevera Ralph, Oregon Festival of American Music
George Russell, School District #4J
Ted Stevens, LCOG Senior and Disabled Services
Stefano Viggiano, Lane Transit District
Bob Welch, Register Guard
Capt. Elvia Williams, Eugene Police Department

C. Key Findings

Overall, most interviewees felt that the City generally had a good park, recreation and open space system. A common theme among the responses was that a valued benefit of parks, open spaces and recreation facilities is to provide opportunities for the community to gather and opportunities to enjoy nature and get away from the urban environment. Several commented positively on the City's accomplishments with the past bond measure and serial levy, and noted their approval of the expanded use of partnerships to leverage many of these projects.



Many noted it will become more difficult to acquire land for parks or natural areas as the City grows. Most interviewees recognized the need to expand parks and natural areas to keep up with population growth and to ensure that all residents have adequate access. A variety of recreation facility needs were mentioned, including neighborhood-based community centers and sports facilities. Many identified youth as the population with the greatest recreation need. Almost all interviewees mentioned funding or the economy as a key issue or challenge in Eugene.

Many of the interviewees expressed concern about reaching the broader community and ensuring that the Comprehensive Plan reflects the needs of the entire community. The majority of the interviewees recommended reaching the public by going to places where people already gather or to groups where they already meet.

Strengths and weaknesses of the City's current park, recreation and open space system, opportunities for the future, and possible threats to success as identified in the stakeholder interviews are summarized below:

Strengths

- People value Eugene parks and natural areas.
- Parks and natural areas provide the following benefits to Eugene residents:
 - Places for community gathering and opportunities for recreation.
 - Relief from the urban environment and an opportunity to experience nature and the outdoors.
 - Recreation opportunities for children, youth and families.
 - Opportunities for health and wellness through participation in physical activities, such as sports, aquatics and outdoor recreation.
- Eugene's natural areas provide significant habitat. Some people value these areas beyond the benefit of recreational use.
- Eugene's recreation resources are appreciated by the community. Some of these include City trails, the Willamette River and the Hult Center.
- Despite budget constraints, City recreation and cultural services are viewed positively for efforts to provide services through a combination of City programs partnerships with other agencies.
- Eugene has done well at protecting natural resources and open space, even though more efforts may be needed.
- Interviewees were generally satisfied with park maintenance.
- Interviewees viewed the City's performance with the past serial levies and bond issues as generally positive.
- People in Eugene are active, well informed, and they care about the City.

Weaknesses

- Sustaining recreation programs and services while the City budget diminishes is a challenge.
- There is a need for additional recreation programs, such as adult programs, youth programs and activities focusing on diverse cultures, as well as programs that could bridge gaps created by other budget reductions.
- The cost of programs makes them unaffordable to some.
- Places for youth to gather and recreate is one of the City's greatest needs.
- A variety of services are needed by youth, including the arts, sports and fitness, and services for youth at risk.
- Residents differ in their opinions of the relative importance of active recreation and opportunities to experience the natural environment in the City of Eugene.
- Some areas do not have equal access to parks, natural areas, community centers or aquatic facilities. North Eugene, West Eugene, Bethel, Churchill, Fairgrounds,



Santa Clara, and Trainsong were all mentioned as being underserved for certain recreation opportunities.

- There is a shortage of sports fields.
- Some natural areas may be “over-used” or impacted by humans and animals.
- The City’s efforts to protect natural areas, including riparian areas and prairie areas, should be expanded.
- Maintenance and improvements to existing parks, natural areas and recreation facilities are needed.
- There are a lot of meetings Citywide, and some feel decisions tend to be based on the vocal minority, rather than the overall community.

Opportunities

- Continue to address quality of life in Eugene by ensuring that all residents have equitable access to parks, open space and recreation opportunities.
- Improve existing parks and natural areas.
- Provide neighborhood-based community centers.
- Ensure that adequate sports facilities exist throughout the community to meet community needs.
- Continue to expand youth development opportunities, especially opportunities lost due to cuts in education, non-school programs and teen programs.
- Respond to the needs of Eugene’s diverse population, such as people with disabilities, youth, individuals from diverse cultures, seniors, low-income individuals and other populations with special needs.
- Provide opportunities for residents to appreciate Eugene’s cultural and historic heritage, natural resources, and the arts.
- Consider how parks, recreation and open space can contribute to the economic development of the community.
- Improve existing partnerships and build new ones, including the business community and the schools.
- Expand existing volunteer opportunities to involve a broad range of residents in planning, implementing and maintaining parks and recreation resources and services.
- Improve public information about all parks, natural areas, recreation, and cultural services in City (both public and private), including environmental education.

Threats

- Financial resources are becoming more limited, and citizens are not confident about the future outlook.
- Development may limit land available future parks and natural areas.
- Major cutbacks in social services and education have occurred that create increased need for parks and recreation services.



II. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

A detailed summary of the interview responses follows. The number in parentheses indicates how many people mentioned a particular statement.

1) What do you think are the most pressing community needs in Eugene?

- Education, Top of the list is funding for education (5).
- Parks (4).
 - There are needs for parks in various places throughout the area, especially in Bethel.
 - Finding places for play and quiet time as the City grows.
 - Park and recreation space and facilities for activities for youth and adults.
 - A safety valve for social issues. Rates highly, but currently education and social services are a more important need.
- Homelessness (2).
- The funding crisis for public services. This is the most pressing need at any level. Quite honestly, the taxation system is in tremendous need of reform.
- There's a great need for support structures (roads, etc.).
- Finding a balance in terms of the need for development/business friendliness and the need for open space, livability, a healthy environment.
- Maintaining and improving public safety to meet needs of a growing population.
- Affordable housing.
- Polarization in City politics.
- Traffic.
- A vital downtown.
- Understanding public funding and what's expected from public resources.
- Need a clear community sense of where municipal services begin and where private services are appropriate.
- City needs to decide whether to be in or out of cultural services – not provide them one year, but not the next. City should ensure they exist, but not necessarily provide.
- Understanding of non-profits and role of sponsorship dollars.
- Quality of life.
- Need wild lands nearby. It can be compatible to have public access.
- Bigger, better natural areas.
- Parks.
- Social services – services for drug-addicted, mentally ill, and homeless. Were already problems, and Measure 28 will make ongoing problems worse.
- Arts and arts education should be a priority. It has been shown that these help to reduce crime.
- Biggest need is for stand-alone buildings with 4 gym floors and classrooms. These should be located in each high school area; and be self-contained so that there can be one supervisor for entire building.
- Youth needs – both City and schools have abdicated responsibilities.
- Social services.
- #1 is economic development and finding a way to move the economy forward. #2 is adequate funding for all levels of education, # 3 is finding ways to fund infrastructure of all types (installation and maintenance of streets, sewer, parks and other municipal services).
- Social services to address the huge chasm about to hit (especially in mental health, health care and adolescent mental health).



2) What do you think the role of the City's Parks and Open Space Division and Recreation Services Division is in addressing these needs?

- More space for homeless. It would be nice to have a safe place for homeless people to sleep.
- Address youth needs with programs – Schools can't do because of budget cuts. Existing bond measure efforts a start, but not enough.
- Provide programs cut from schools (arts, sports, etc.).
- Don't need more parks and open spaces – need programs.
- Recreation programs provide a wonderful socialization process. Lots of different people have to work and play together.
- Parks provide a contrast to the urban environment.
- Parks provide extracurricular activities and programs schools can't.
- Provide land ownership, restoration and maintenance of lands in native condition wherever possible.
- Ensure cultural services exist, but not necessarily provide them. Look at what's most efficient and what's best for community to see what City should provide.
- Key is stability. Decide whether to provide specific program areas or not.
- The public versus private services issue is big. Some areas are clearly City services; other areas are unclear. Look at what makes the most sense financially and for the community. Hult Center is an example – may make more sense for City to run the building only, and have private promoters book the shows. The Cuthbert is a big challenge. The staff is good. But Council wanted it to be a cash cow, and it can't be, even for a private provider. This is because of the location, the size of the market in Eugene, uneven summer weather, inconvenience for acts to get to Eugene, and competing free outdoor venues in Albany and Roseburg.
- To be an advocate for open space and more recreational opportunities and places for them to occur. Work with community groups to reach consensus on how to provide.
- Listen to the people – determine whether there's a need and ways to make it happen.
- Go to the community and ask citizens to identify where the City is and where it should go.
- Have done a good job so far. Last long range plan and bond was really successful.
- Address park needs in growing areas like Bethel.
- Probably a limited role in meeting the overall funding crisis. This is really a larger City role. But senior centers, community centers and the disability center could be used for education and outreach purposes to explain funding crisis. Library, Hult Center, and cultural services could be used in the same way.
- Library access is a good way to meet some of the social service needs.
- Provide community and neighborhood parks.

3) What are the major parks, recreation, and open space issues facing the City of Eugene?

- Shortage of sports fields (2).
- Sustaining recreational opportunities through existing facilities and programs; and restoration of programs and services cut over the past decade.
- New library is beautiful, but the book collection is inadequate and, except for current popular fiction, is out of date – need to fill it up.
- Bethel area is underserved.
- Whole issue of open space and acquisition of land is an issue throughout Eugene.
- Not much undeveloped or developable land for neighborhood parks and community recreation sites.



- Not much in swimming/aquatic activities, especially in certain areas of the City.
- Has been progress on partnering with schools to develop shared athletic facilities. Should do more partnering with schools or other community agencies to meet park needs.
- Funding – need to identify resources to build and maintain parks and open space.
- Limited supply of land. With the strong commitment to the current UGB, there may be conflicts between new development and parks.
- Open space (a place to walk the dog, read a book quietly, or get away from it all).
- Identify division between private and public and leverage this better.
- Perception of inequities in park services.
- Maintenance of parks is biggest and costliest issue – Need to provide a way for volunteers to get involved to help deal with budget shortages.
- Hears from people that the parks are great and there should be more of them.
- Government needs to look at how to reallocate resources to be more efficient with what it has.
- Provide good quality habitat areas as populations grows.
- Spencer Butte is overused – need more natural areas to disperse use and to consider limiting access in some cases.
- Do public education to teach people how to be responsible stewards of natural areas.
- More park space.
- Need funding for maintenance.
- There is no money to buy parks.
- Need some facility development — More pools and pools opened year round, community center in downtown, new parks acquired with new development, and links between parks with greenways.
- More neighborhood-oriented spaces, especially ones with programs for middle school and teenage youth.
- Need more active recreation facilities. Good job of partnering after last bond measure, but need more.
- Recreation resources – for large community gatherings, but also some localized spaces for different kinds of community activities.
- Ideally, every neighborhood would have a park within walking distance, which isn't the case now.
- After school programming for all ages to keep kids focused, in school, and out of trouble.
- Activity opportunities for parents of small children – especially programs for low income families and bilingual families.
- Overall goal should be to increase capacity for healthy community building
- Keeping up current service level.

4) What do you value most about parks, recreation, and open space?

- Programs and active recreation facilities will impact people more than more parks and open space.
- Bike and running trails.
- Play areas for young kids.
- That parks are there! Gives visual and mental release from everyday life.
- Uses parks for passive recreation.
- Appreciates visual contrasts of parks to urban development.
- Opportunity to leave urban environment and access natural environments quickly.
- Visual resource.
- Public space, parks, and public facilities like library, Hult Center, community centers are great. City should focus more on these and less on programming.



- Services for at-risk youth. Private groups can't do this. City has made some efforts, but has lacked Council leadership. They do feel-good things, but no real commitment. Strong leadership could be effective.
- Parks and open spaces are oases.
- Parks provide a place to get away from frenetic pace of life.
- Athletics and parks are places where people can participate, get together, have fun.
- Appreciates opportunities that parks provide, and that they are great places to spend time.
- Appreciates that Eugene values physical activities – running, bicycling, walking, youth and adult sports.
- The facilities and parks that the City has are very valued by the community and the staff are advocates.
- Values young families having access to parks.
- As home are built closer together, play areas and other places for kids are becoming more important.
- Appreciates park system and open space, and that Eugene has preserved parks and open space over the years.
- Values the facilities that are available, but thinks it is a shame that modernization of facilities has been limited by funding. Losing Kaufman Center was a blow to the west side.
- A benefit of living in Oregon is the relationship with the natural world. In urban environment, parks and open space express that relationship. Due to climate, indoor opportunities are also important. Libraries and schools are important community resources.
- Do a better job distributing access to indoor and outdoor recreation.
- Acquire open space when there an opportunity to do so.
- Values the rivers in town – favorite thing. City should do a better job with them.

5) How do parks, open spaces, and recreation services improve quality of life in Eugene?

- Open spaces provide country in an urban area (2).
- By offering library, cultural and recreation opportunities.
- Lots of ways – provides families with recreation opportunities close to home.
- Parks and open space break up urban development.
- Eugene's parks provide opportunities for families to do things together.
- Provision of outlets and activities for physical activities that Eugene citizens enjoy.
- Organized activities and programs (youth summer programs, adult programs, etc.) contribute to quality of life.
- Parks give communities places to gather.
- Parks provide quality open spaces in increasingly urban environment.
- Parks help define neighborhoods.
- By providing an opportunity to leave the urban environment and access the natural environment, and providing it nearby where people live.
- City owns significant habitat (prairie areas) that is often not preserved in the Northwest. Important ecologically, beyond the benefits of these natural areas to people who live in Eugene.
- Provide places to get away from people, as well as places to get together with people.
- By saving open space in the community – along the river and in community parks. The visual aspect and playgrounds are major benefits. In general, parks are luxuries that add livability.
- Kids have phenomenal degree of self-determination in Eugene due to City size. Kids can bike anywhere alone.



- Riverfront parks and greenways are wonderful!
- Provide a visual and mental release from everyday life.
- Provide FREE safe places for youth to congregate.
- They have a calming effect.
- Critical to livability to have parks and be able to experience open space.
- Not so sure that quality of life is being provided for after last brutal assault on recreation programming. Not sure what's left. Programming is a walking disaster.
- There is a decrease in quality of life with total elimination of adult programs – a community-building opportunity is now gone.
- There is a decrease in quality of life because kids programs aren't as accessible.

6) In your opinion, are additional recreation, cultural or community services needed in Eugene? If yes, what is needed?

- Need for facilities for youth sports. City should provide facilities, not necessarily the programs.
- Fields and gyms are needed for active youth recreation. Classrooms could be incorporated into new facilities.
- Youth spaces are biggest need.
- Need for activities focusing on cultural diversity to educate citizens. Would make people more comfortable with others of different backgrounds and could encourage more diverse participation.
- More pools or expanded pool services.
- Downtown community center.
- Acquire parks in new development areas.
- Eugene does a good job compared to other communities. Keep current service level as population grows.
- Biggest priority is to protect remaining oak prairie habitats.
- Riparian area protection is needed. City should expand on efforts on Willamette and Amazon Creek.
- May need developed parks in specific areas of town, but is not as familiar with parks that aren't natural areas.
- In recreation, programming is pretty good. In cultural services, both programming and venues are pretty good. Doesn't know enough to comment on community services.
- At-risk youth services needed – maybe additional services or just reworking what already is there. It is a challenge to identify needy youth and families. Need to target them for outreach, not expect them to find out about programs themselves.
- Provide sport facilities.
- Provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages, and especially youth.
- Aquatic center on SW side – the Churchill area has nothing.
- Need open space near homes. People value nearby open space. As population grows, it will be difficult to hang onto the ability to have nearby parks and open space.
- Tremendous need for youth playing fields.
- Need for maintenance of existing parks, but it is tough to fund. Will need to develop partnerships with other groups to take on maintenance.
- Need low cost / no cost recreational opportunities for specific populations (youth, seniors, people with disabilities).
- Cost is a big issue for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Need programming to replace what was lost.
- Need improvement of community's relationship to river -- Look at education strategies, citizenship building. Tobacco's a big issue, why not rivers? Parks and Recreation needs to take a leadership role here. Some ideas:



- dog cleanup education.
- enforcement on drinking in public.
- providing more restrooms or restrooms in different locations.

7) In your opinion, are park and recreation facility improvements needed in Eugene? If yes, what is needed?

- Additional playing fields are needed (3).
- More facilities of all types could be used (2).
- Gyms and fields are needed for active youth recreation.
- Infrastructure at community centers is in need of upgrading.
- Need more branch libraries, especially as City grows to west and north.
- Since last bond, there were major improvements (Amazon, skate park are examples).
- Need more done on open space.
- Some facilities still need upkeep and renovations.
- Existing facilities are great, but unevenly dispersed. Need to provide services throughout City. Santa Clara is an example. Some areas are incorporated, some aren't. No Eugene parks anywhere nearby. The people there need services.
- Need better maintenance.
- Strategically locate new parks.
- Soccer fields.
- Any planning effort would show there are many facility needs. Community process is needed to identify and prioritize facility improvements.
- Sport facilities needed but find out which from public.
- Parks maintenance does a marvelous job.
- Some facilities could be needed, but would mostly be places for activities to occur.
- Cuthbert is too formal. Provide a venue for summer in the park music series. Maybe provide informal amphitheatres in neighborhoods.
- Parks seem to be very well maintained.
- Successful places like Amazon should be replicated.
- Personally doesn't feel lacking in facilities. Maybe Bethel or lower income areas need parks.
- One of the cheapest ways to improve the quality of life is to have a higher standard of public behavior. City should pay attention to drug dealing and similar crime.
- Would support good service levels throughout City for active parks, and that may mean additional active parks or more facilities.
- There's an uneven dispersal of neighborhood facilities.
- Need facilities for programs.
- Adolescent recreation programming (more than just sports).
- Bring arts programs back into outdoor facilities.
- Take more responsibility about how community interacts with river. Can think of only two places where access is encouraged. Provide better access. Ideas include a boat ramp, other designs to encourage access, education about river and citizens' relationship to it.

8) In your opinion, are additional open space and natural resource protection efforts needed in Eugene? If yes, what efforts are needed?

- City has made progress. Efforts to date have been successful, and there is no need to expand on them.
- No additional efforts needed.
- Need to be diligent because land goes away quickly. Any new open space that can be added should be.
- Green corridors are a good idea. The green corridor connecting through Amazon is a wonderful example and should be enhanced if possible.
- City does a good job. Need to keep up current level of protection, not necessarily increase it.
- Thinks that there is quite a bit of park and open space land for Eugene's size. City has done a good job over the years. Doesn't feel there is a critical need to add to the inventory. If UGB were expanded significantly, that answer would change.
- Stay ahead of population growth. Move ahead to purchase land and restore and maintain it in a natural condition.
- Acquisition is important, but don't purchase so much that restoration and maintenance is precluded.
- Be sure to take advantage of good opportunities for natural area acquisition when they arise, even if restoration and maintenance sources aren't known. However, don't willy-nilly purchase property without knowing how to restore and maintain it.
- Need less effort in that area! Honestly, if half of those people left town, it'd be better off.
- The City has lost a lot of money through lawsuits in this arena as a result of half-cocked natural resource protection efforts.
- There may be a need to secure parkland, but would need to see where growth would occur to determine if more parkland is needed. By this, they don't mean more natural resource areas, just more land for parks.
- Natural resource people are against parks development and want no public use of this land. The natural resource community is opposed to neighborhood parks and developed parks. That is totally opposite of many of the best-loved parks in Eugene.
- Main effort should be to protect what we already have.
- Look for ways to build open spaces where people don't have to drive long distances.
- City provided some additional open space after last bond. Still quite a few needs. Probably the most difficult sell of all park goals – it protects the future.
- City has made efforts with West Eugene wetlands and around Amazon. Other areas need open space efforts.
- As new developments go in, need to ensure there are adequate open spaces and park-like spaces nearby.
- Some additional acquisition is important, especially on periphery of City. Spencer's Butte is a good example.
- Provide protection not just at river, but also in wetland areas.
- Adult education/recreation programs for new people to increase awareness of natural resources and responsible use. Popular areas such as Spencer's Butte, Mount Pisgah, and Skinners Butte get trashed by people who don't know how to be responsible users.



9) Do you think there are any neighborhoods in Eugene that are under-served by parks, open spaces and recreation services?

- Needs to be equal opportunities across the whole City.
- With efforts in Bethel, thinks most neighborhoods are pretty equally served.
- Thinks yes, even though own area is well-served.
- Newer areas (like Bethel) are probably underserved.
- Bethel and Santa Clara don't have much.
- Churchill. City has started efforts in Bethel, but there isn't much there yet. Santa Clara is underserved. Part of the lack in Bethel/Santa Clara is confusion about where City/County boundary is.
- Certain areas need branch libraries.
- The north side.
- North Eugene has very few natural areas. May not be much opportunity to provide them because of development and agricultural impacts.
- May be opportunities in North and NW Eugene for restoration, although it is more expensive and labor intensive than acquisition of intact habitat lands. Could consider acquiring and restoring floodplains – look adjacent to Willamette first.
- Developed parkland is probably lacking in N and NW Eugene, and should have distribution equal to the rest of the City.
- Bethel is underserved. Difficult for City – Bethel is not very supportive of City government. But there should be equal opportunities across City, no matter how people vote.
- West side is underserved. Because the fairgrounds are there, people think the west side has great park service. But the fairgrounds don't serve that purpose, and Monroe Park is the only other park around there.
- The south end has only the Amazon, and that's about it.
- The Trainsong, Santa Clara and River Road areas are underserved.
- Personally doesn't feel qualified to answer. Isn't familiar enough with other areas of the City, especially north and west.
- There must be, but can't identify specific areas.
- Is sure there are, but doesn't feel knowledgeable enough to say which ones.
- Yes, but not going to go into describing which because the City already knows.

10) What improvements, if any, to parks, open spaces and recreation services do you think should be the highest priority for the City of Eugene?

- Gyms and athletic fields.
- Free after school programs for elementary and middle school students. Need homework help to assist students to achieve academic standards. Programs would provide safety by giving kids a supervised safe place after school.
- Teenager programs are needed, in general. Teens have different issues from younger kids and would be more likely to go to evening programs, not after school.
- In the short-term, offer more classes – enhance what's being lost in schools and possibly even what's lost in social services.
- In the long-term, keep considering where to acquire land and what to do with it. Also, keep thinking about building facilities in parks.
- Expanding library services – adding to collection, ensuring operating funds.
- Maintaining and expanding recreation opportunities through community centers, senior center, other facilities.
- Providing low cost/no cost programs for seniors, disabled, youth.
- Make sure to maintain what we have.



- After maintenance of existing parks, provide additional open space and parks in places without them.
- First priority is to acquire and restore natural areas.
- Increase environmental education (signage, newsletters, brochures on specific topics).
- Make Spencer Butte a major priority to assess, restore and consider limiting human use. Hammered pretty hard by both people and dogs.
- Dogs are a huge impact at some sites. Barking has a negative effect on natural area experience. Trampling is severe. Dog waste is a problem at some parks. Try out 'pooper scooper' baggie stations. Enforce leash laws. Educate about impacts of going off-trail.
- Dog parks are a good idea, but no one else can use them and they are too often located near water. Have fees for use of dog areas in parks (maybe \$50 a yr) and consider proximity of water when siting dog areas.
- Resolve cat predation in parks. Education efforts could help.
- Take a look at what's really working and do more of that.
- Have a clear purpose and mission – Doesn't think this is the case now.
- For Hult Center – City should focus on facility, look to private programming.
- For Cuthbert, give up on the idea that it will make money and treat as more of a park.
- Provide satellite library services – not everyone can go downtown. Centralizing services is not always best for the community.
- Not in favor of "open space". Parks should have a purpose – they are organized, controlled areas where people have access. "Open space" is leftover spaces or places where people aren't permitted access.
- Priorities should come from broader community.
- #1 is enhancing the existing system, #2 is developing new parks, #3 is more leveraging of youth programs after school (beyond the existing serial levy). Likes how City is making after-school programs possible, but isn't necessarily providing the service.
- Maintain what's already there.
- Accessibility to existing facilities.
- Equitable geographic distribution of services (especially services for seniors and youths).
- Playing fields of all types. If interviewee had to pick only one, this would be it. School fields will continue to help, but the need is broad and across the whole community.
- Open space.
- Maintenance of facilities.
- Access to river and simply making it more inviting. Not only new facilities, but also education and involvement.

11) In your opinion, how familiar is the public with parks, open spaces and recreation and cultural services provided by the City of Eugene?

- Fairly familiar (2).
 - No understanding of long range planning, or of long range needs and issues.
 - Bond measures are supported.
 - General awareness, but not widespread.
 - Know it's there, but not who provides them.
- Pretty active community. People are moderately well informed about the services.
- Mildly.
- Don't know who's in control of what (City, County, Schools).



- People would be surprised by combination of services under one department.
- Getting through to people is difficult.
- Not aware of City's services.
- Probably all over the map. City generally does a good job of outreach through program guide.
- Judging by use, people know about natural areas.
- City does a good job of outreach.
- People know there are parks, but not who maintains them. Don't understand what goes into providing services.
- Everyone gets mailers and that's their knowledge. Doesn't think that people need to be aware of the Divisions, just the programs.
- Definitely doesn't need to be media campaign to improve Division's image or enhance public awareness of Division itself.
- Pretty familiar. City does a good job with outreach – mailings, City calendar listings, PSAs.
- Varies by element – great appreciation for library, Hult Center, cultural elements; less with parks, open space and community centers.
- Not very. It's hard to get the average citizen to be aware. Controversial issues get a lot of press, but that's it. This person is very civically involved, but has no idea what's left in parks and recreation after cuts.
- On scale of 1-10, about 5. City relies on non-profits for some services. City doesn't have resources to do much. City is getting better about providing referrals for activities they don't provide.

12) What methods do you think would be most effective in encouraging community participation in the Park, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Planning project?

- Neighborhood meetings (3).
- Pick a couple of representatives from each area of town and have them approach people personally.
- Card in the mail and newspaper notices won't do it. Need personal touch and time for discussion.
- Write up as an article in Register Guard; more effective than paper insert – Eugene Weekly too.
- Work with neighborhood groups.
- Go to people, don't expect them to come to you.
- Need focus groups and stakeholder interviews – tough to reach average resident.
- People are apathetic. Will be difficult to interest them in a planning project because it's long range and broad in nature.
- Focus groups and stakeholder interviews are good, but will be tough to reach the average resident who isn't already involved. If 50% of meeting attendees weren't already involved, that would be a great turnout.
- A lot of competition from computers and TV. If only you could email everyone.
- Not neighborhood associations. Not big groups.
- Eugene is way too process-oriented. There are way too many meetings. There are people who are basically professional meeting-goers.
- The City puts a lot of stock in public processes, but they don't necessarily represent the broader community. There is a skewed view – people show up to oppose things.
- Public meetings are often just there to get a stamp of approval, after the decision is already made.
- Probably better ways to gather data than through public meetings. Maybe do a sampling to reach the range of community members.



- Don't do things the same old way or you'll end up with the same old unsatisfactory results.
- Survey in the Register Guard.
- Booth at Saturday Market, basketball games, other places where people congregate.
- Use schools and adult and youth-serving organizations.
- Media campaign wouldn't hurt to reach people who go to parks, but don't ever think about how they got there.
- Will be hard. Develop a process that involves key members of the community and reaches out to people involved with various clubs and organizations. Need to do a study of how to bring people on board.
- City did well during last parks planning effort, but it was hard to maintain involvement through the whole process.
- South Eugene passes everything (bonds, levies, etc.) so plans always tend to have items targeted toward that area. Need to consider and involve other areas that aren't as supportive.
- Get general information out about planning activities – only this phone call made him aware about the project.
- Get media stories published, if possible.
- Publicize through neighborhood associations.
- Reach out to constituents already using park and recreation facilities. Could even have a kiosk at parks inviting people to participate.
- The good news is the City called, rather than sending a letter notifying about a meeting – busy people have no time to go downtown.
- There are drawbacks to most media.
- Many people don't read the papers.
- Need to hit a lot of radio stations to get good community coverage.
- TV has limitations.
- Go out to where community is; if there is not broad-based outreach, there will be a skewed view of priorities. For example, if you use the Eugene Weekly or Register Guard for articles, advertisements, or notices, understand that these only reach a segment of the population.

13) Are there any people, groups, or organizations that we should involve in the Comprehensive Plan project?

- Schools (4).
- Kidsports (3).
- Adults with disabilities. There are about 17,000 adults with disabilities in Lane County – population is often overlooked, and it leads to unhappiness later on (Eugene Federal Courthouse is an example).
- Disability Services Advisory Council.
- City Accessibility Council.
- Advocacy groups like The Arc of Lane County.
- Besides the usual groups, engage school councils. They are active users, plus there is a partnership with schools to use fields.
- Community groups such as Rotary, Chamber, Petersen Barn Community Center, etc. Reach out to regular community through these groups so they can report back and be influential.
- Go to places where people are already involved to some degree.
- Non-profit service providers.
- Soccer organizations.
- Adult programs.



- Oriented to natural resource groups, and thinks City has involved the broad range of all those groups. Glad to see broad range of natural area groups at the Natural Areas focus group.
- Nature conservancy groups.
- Senior citizen groups.
- In Eugene, there's always another group that could be involved.
- Sports organizations.
- Can list a whole lot of people who shouldn't be involved!
- If this is a fresh look, leave organizations out – already invested in status quo.
- Businesses in Eugene are wrongly viewed as enemy of people – go out of the way to involve professionals and business people who are interested in community issues.
- Neighborhood groups.
- Service organizations (Rotary, Lions) – could use park issue as an activity or to fundraise.
- AIA.
- ASLA.
- Lane Arts Council.
- Existing park groups (such as Mt. Pisgah group).
- The Y, or possibly someone from their board.
- Churches.
- Social service agencies.
- Key is to get a cross-section, not just loudest voices.
- Everyone goes out to the neighborhood organizations. They are an okay way to reach people, even though a lot don't participate in them.
- Reach out to where people already participate:
 - School communities.
 - Pre-School communities.
 - High school kids.
 - Large work groups (Sacred Heart, downtown employees, unions, - not CEOs, but actual workers).
 - Seniors.
 - Health clubs / non-City fitness classes.
 - Low income housing communities.
 - Social service providers and clients.
- Understands that resources constrain input. But with current methods, you get the same participants. Tired of same old people showing up at meetings. They say they represent the whole community, but interviewee doesn't believe it anymore.

14) How can the City best involve community members in parks, open spaces and recreation and cultural services on an ongoing basis?

- Committees from different geographic areas – meet quarterly; all convene jointly once a year; run meetings by Robert's Rules.
- Offer volunteer opportunities – use their skills, create short-term commitment opportunities; provide list of activities they could help with. Short-term and specific time duration is the key – people don't want to volunteer if they worry they'll be stuck forever.
- Offer internships to students in education programs for after school programs – partner with Lane Community College, Pacific University, etc.; supervise interns and give them school credit (would be a cost, but not as costly as a paid staff).
- Advisory committee made up of the gamut of users.



- Neighborhood Leaders Group.
- Mailings, newspaper inserts, quarterly reports.
- Hult Center Advisory Committee is a good model – many different perspectives are represented.
- City should find a way to have consistent communication with the public.
- Generally the City does a good job of providing input opportunities. So many that it seems like there are meetings or hearings every day of the week. City often overestimates public's appetite for involvement. Maybe departments need to coordinate their efforts.
- What happens now is that the general public tunes out and special interests plug in (due to number of meetings). You hear from the same people over and over.
- The best way to reach people is to take the message to existing groups.
- There are already advisory groups for individual components (library, Hult Center). Should be an advisory council for parks, recreation and opens pace made up of representatives from existing advisory groups.
- Get media coverage of the neat events that the City provides to reach people who don't know what is available.
- Have events and invite public for exposure.
- Talk to senior groups and other groups about available services.
- Doesn't even know if it's possible. It's desirable, but will be difficult to accomplish. Written information doesn't make impact you want. Focus on regular reports to groups already operating and that can have an influence.
- Thinks the City already does a pretty good job. Can't think of anything else they could do. Also thinks they do a good job at public outreach for planning for individual parks, too.
- Provide evaluation opportunities. Could do forms. Personally doesn't like filling out evaluation forms, but some will respond. Or could do a random call to a percentage of participants in a program or at a facility to get feedback.

15) (If interviewee represents an organization) How could the City and your organization partner or build upon an existing partnership in the future to improve parks, open space, and recreation and cultural services?

Eugene Police Department

- Certain types of partnering that work for PD. Tap into programs PD offers on crime prevention, self-protection, DUI training.
- PD can't offer long-term activity or commitments (such as a once per week commitment) due to the nature of police work. However, special programs, short-term activities, or safety fairs could be areas of partnership.

Kidsports

- Going reasonably well now.
- City needs to expand funding for youth sports.

Lane Arts Council

- LAC wants art in the park.
- LAC is very knowledgeable in the running of arts programs. Could easily marry LAC expertise with recreation (which is experienced at arts and crafts programs) to put on more artist-based recreational programs.

Lane Transit

- City should coordinate activities. Don't duplicate transportation efforts. The City should consider Lane Transit's existing transportation routes when they schedule classes or events and take advantage of transportation already offered, if available.



LCOG Senior and Disabled Services

- Some partnerships exist, but most of the problem is money.
- Before budgets were so severely reduced at City, agency and City had a really good relationship and division of labor. Agency worked closely with City employees, and collaboration was good. Didn't duplicate efforts, but could divide up responsibilities. With positions having been cut, these partnerships don't exist anymore and it is a problem.

Native Plant Society

- Some partnership exists through yearly work parties that NPS puts on (usually pulling ivy).
- City involves NPS in planning efforts at all levels.
- Thinks that City staff is aware that there can be opportunities for native plants or natural areas even in smaller parks, especially for education purposes.
- Thinks the City should continue its current efforts to partner with NPS and that the City is doing well.

Oregon Festival of American Music

- Nice model is for the City to put out an RFP for response by private providers. The Partnership for Youth program was good in that it worked this way.
- The City should let private non-profits build capacity. The City will leverage resources by working with other groups.
- Long-term commitments are more important than short term fixes.
- City needs to consider the effect of actions like the proposed Living Wage Ordinance on private groups.
- Don't want to privatize everything. There is a role for government in providing services, but in non-traditional services, the City can set a framework for private groups to meet goals the City would like to accomplish and that the groups can meet more flexibly and cost-effectively.

School District 4J

- Establish a joint planning committee or brainstorming committee about how to work together, particularly as both agencies struggle with resource problems.
- City works with individual principals, especially those with schools adjacent to parks.
- Could have a principal's advisory committee.

School District 52

- Great partnership already exists.
- City has assisted with acquisition of new land for schools, planning around where new schools and fields should be located.
- Should continue to explore schools partnership and expand to the broader Bethel community.

University of Oregon

- Already do a lot with partnerships. The City values UO as a resource, and UO values being in Eugene.
- Could always do better. Sometimes huge opportunities pass by.
- The problem with their partnership is that it's too personally dependent, and not structurally designed. If someone leaves, you don't know where to go. Retirements are having a major toll.
- Personal relationships make or break this type of partnerships, so a process needs to be developed to encourage those relationships so there's continuity.



16) If there was one key element the City should keep in mind while developing its Park, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan, what should it be?

- Listen to what public says – public employees are limited by their own thoughts and experiences.
- Get an accurate assessment of what populace really needs and wants.
- Sustainability in terms of physical parks, not recreational programs, which need to change, based on interests and needs. If a proposed development can't be maintained, don't do it.
- Keep current level of service – pick a measure of current park service and make maintaining that service level a priority as the City grows.
- Stay in front of population growth through acquisition, restoration and maintenance of natural areas.
- The City should develop a clear understanding of where it should provide services and where it should affect services to be provided. Be more comfortable dealing with partnerships. Sometimes all the City needs to do is facilitate.
- Leverage – likes what's been done with after school programs and with school partnerships. Partnerships and teaming can make resources go further. For example, City collects \$8 million/yr. for storm water. Could use these funds to achieve multiple objectives (land for storm water control in open spaces).
- Have the vision to look ahead and the courage to go forward with it.
- Maintain a dialogue with community or neighbors who might be stakeholders.
- Seek as much community involvement as possible and a really diverse group of folks to be involved with planning process.
- To provide quality service and improve quality of life, City needs to support parks, recreation and open spaces. When times are tough, the tendency is to cut 'non-essential' services like parks and concentrate on fire, police, etc. But parks, recreation, and cultural services have a major impact on quality of life and City should remain committed to them.
- Keep creativity and integrity uppermost in mind.
- There are people who this plan affects who are not as vocal as others. Decisions are made based on who shows up, not necessarily on what the majority of the community wants. City is not hearing everyone's voice. Doesn't know how to reach those that aren't as vocal, and knows it is a challenge, but thinks it is important to reach them.

17) Do you have any other questions or comments?

- Appreciates opportunity to give input.
- City has been a great partner. Appreciates the City's helping to convince the public that government agencies can work together and provide economies of scale by partnering.
- As part of the plan, City will need to develop priorities. Will be important to involve as many community members as possible in establishing priorities.
- Glad someone's thinking about this; easier to value library because it's tangible. Parks and open space aren't as tangible, but there's value in play for any age.
- This type of interview allows people to forward a lot more complicated ideas – appreciates the opportunity.
- Really appreciates getting called as part of this project.
- Gaining multiple perspectives on something like this is really important.
- Dan Stanley of Guistina Lumber Co. would be a great contact; chairs UO Foundation and actively working to make downtown better.
- Hugh and Sue Pritchard would reflect a different view of the community. Their company is the largest commercial real estate firm in Eugene.



- Hendricks Park should be maintained – a real symbol of the City.
- Good the City is getting feedback and hopes they'll act on it.
- Really appreciated getting called as part of this project.
- Weed and Seed – a federal community grant – Bethel has a committee that meets regularly. Might be a good contact for this project.

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